



DIVISIONS
ENERGY
GAS AND OIL
GEOLOGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
MINED LAND RECLAMATION
MINERAL MINING
MINES
ADMINISTRATION

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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Expanded Water Quality, Coal Production Information Available on Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy Website

Big Stone Gap, VA – Visitors to the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy's (DMME) website can now sign up to be notified when National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) applications are filed with the agency by coal mine permit applicants. In addition, the Division of Mined Land Reclamation (DMLR) Data System has been expanded and includes information on Virginia's annual coal production and employment from 1955 to the present.

According to DMLR director Randy Casey, DMME is committed to ensuring public participation opportunities and these new, web-based capabilities build on the tools available to the public. "The Department has worked with the State Water Control Board/Department of Environmental Quality since 1980 to streamline the public notice and participation process by combining the coal surface mining and NPDES permits," said Casey.

Coal mine permit applicants are required to publish a public notice announcing their intent to obtain a mining permit. DMME added the announcement of the NPDES application to that notice process. Each notice is published once a week for four consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where mining is proposed to take place. During that time, residents can file comments with the DMME, review the permit application in the local courthouse or DMME office, and request an informal conference to comment on the application. After the fourth notice is published, the public comment period is extended for 30 additional days.

"DMME has completed work on a process to allow individuals to sign up via the DMME website to receive notification when a new NPDES permit is prepared by the agency," said Casey. "The notification process is now officially available online."

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To receive notices about new NPDES permits, the public can sign up for the service on the DMME website, provide their email address and select the notification type desired. The user can then select from a number of criteria including company name, application number, mine name, mine permit number and/or county. When a permit is prepared by DMME, the user will receive an email notification from the automated system that will also include a link to the application.

Clicking on the link will bring up a viewable, draft copy of the permit. A watermark on each page of the draft permit will indicate when it was prepared by DMME and when the 30-day comment period on the NPDES portion of the application will close. Written comments may be submitted to the agency by standard mail or email. People who don't have access to a computer can contact DMME by mail at P.O. Box 900, Big Stone Gap, VA 24219. DMME will mail them a list of the new applications. The applications can be viewed at the DMME office in Big Stone Gap, and paper copies of the applications can be obtained.

To review the new annual coal production and employment summary reports, users can search by year, select three separate reports including Large Companies (Greater than 50 employees), Small Companies (Less than 50 employees) or All Companies. The reports can be customized to include production statistics only, employment statistics only or both production and employment.

The DMLR Data Information System can be accessed on the DMME website at www.dmme.virginia.gov.

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